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CIA 'whitewash' charged

Manual probe ignored law: Rep. Mineta

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WASHINGTON—The CIA's secret report on an in-house investigation of its guerrilla-warfare manual for Nicaraguan rebels contains a major gap, says a member of the House Intelligence Committee, because it fails to question whether the manual violated a federal law barring U.S. aid for efforts to overthrow the Nicaraguan government.

The manual advocated the "selective use of violence" by CIA-backed rebels to "neutralize" Nicaraguan government officials.

In an interview, Rep. Norman Mineta [D., Calif.] said he had not yet read the classified report by the CIA inspector general's office. But he said he had received some reports on the inspector general's investigation, and those reports confirmed his initial suspicion that the in-house study would be a "whitewash."

"The first question I asked is, How does the report address the issue of the Boland Amendment?" Mineta said. The amendment, passed in 1982, prohibited the use of CIA or Defense Department funds to help overthrow the Nicaraguan government through December, 1983.

A REBEL leader told the Washington Post last month that the manual was researched, written and printed with CIA help between September and November, 1983.

But Mineta said he was told "there is no mention of it [the Boland Amendment] in the report. I don't know how you could even have an ... investigation without mention of an important question such as the Boland Amendment. It just might have to be redone."

The White House said last Saturday that the CIA report on the manual and a separate investigation by the President's Intelligence Oversight Board found no violation by CIA personnel or contract employees of the "Constitution or laws of the U.S., executive orders or presidential directives." Only a few lower-level CIA employees are being disciplined for "lapses in judgment or performance."

But a White House spokesman said he could not comment on whether either report focused on possible violations of the Boland Amendment, named after Rep. Edward Boland [D., Mass.], chairman of the House Intelligence Committee.

THE AMENDMENT, attached to a fiscal 1983 appropriations bill, said "none of the funds provided in this act may be used by the

Central Intelligence Agency or the Department of Defense to furnish military equipment, military training or advice, or other support for military activities to any group or individual, not part of the country's armed forces, for the purpose of overthrowing the government of Nicaragua or provoking a military exchange between Nicaragua and Honduras." Mineta's staff said the ban was extended to Dec. 8, 1983, by a stopgap spending bill.

In an interview with a reporter for the Washington Post in Miami last month, Edgar Chamorro, a former propaganda chief for the CIA-backed rebels, said the 90-page manual was put together by a CIA contract employee with the pseudonym John Kirkpatrick and printed in Honduras between September and November, 1983, a period covered by the amendment.

Mineta said the CIA had told Congress that it was not trying to overthrow the Nicaraguan government by supporting the rebels. Rather, the agency said, it was helping the rebels interdict the flow of arms between Nicaragua and leftists fighting the U.S.-backed government of El Salvador.

"THE QUESTION is, Why do you need this manual if you are there only for arms interdiction?" Mineta said.

The manual, "Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare," lays out a detailed plan to engage in guerrilla warfare with the aim of toppling the Sandinista government. "When the infiltration and internal subjective control have been developed in a manner parallel to other guerrilla activities, a commander of ours will literally be able to shake up the Sandinista structure and replace it," the manual says.

Mineta said the questions about violations of the Boland Amendment will be raised in House Intelligence Committee hearings scheduled for the week of Dec. 2. But those questions were not the only gaps in the CIA report on the manual, he said.

The CIA report appears to "dump on" lower-level employees at the agency, he said, adding that he doesn't think the manual could have been authorized without approval by senior CIA officers.

The Associated Press reported Wednesday that several midlevel CIA employees disciplined because of the manual have objected to the punishments by refusing to sign letters of reprimand to be placed in their personnel files.

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